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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - ROBERT
PALLADINO
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

1. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies focused their coverage September 1 - 2 on the damage caused by typhoon Talim, and the death of a visiting Chinese official, Zhu Xiangdong, at a spa on Yangmingshan outside Taipei. Several Taipei dailies also reported on the schedules of former President Lee Teng-hui and President Chen Shui-bian's for their separate visits/transits in the United States. The conservative, pro-status quo "United Daily News" carried stories on the schedules topped with the headlines: "Bian Will Visit Foreign Countries in Late September, and He Will Meet with Jeb Bush," and "Lee Teng-hui Will Visit the United States Next Month, and He Will Deliver a Speech in Washington D.C." The Pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" carried the news with the headlines: "During the Transit in the United States, Bian Will Meet with George Bush's Brother Jeb Bush," and "Lee Teng-hui Will Deliver a Speech in Washington D.C. October 6." Taiwan's largest daily, the pro-independence "Liberty Times," downplayed the news about President Chen's transit in the United States, and completely ignored former President Lee's upcoming U.S. visit.

2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the "Taiwan Daily" said U.S.-Taiwan relations have improved, as shown by the fact that the United States is allowing former President Lee Teng-hui to visit the country, and is allowing President Chen Shui-bian to transit the country. The limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" urged the Taiwan authorities to take action to respond to China's "united front" tactics. End summary.

1. "[Former President] Lee Teng-hui's U.S. Visit and President Chen Shui-bian's Miami Transit are Important Indicators for Improved Taiwan-U.S. Relations."

The pro-independence, "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] carried in its editorial (09/02) that:

". Taiwan has tried to broaden its international space for survival via "pragmatic diplomacy," and through the combination of friendly strengths in the United States amongst politicians and civilians. There is, however, a long history of China obstructing and thwarting Taiwan's efforts. This time is no exception. A U.S. Department of State official previously said [former President] Lee Teng-hui could only visit the United States as a 'private individual.' U.S. Ambassador (retired) and Heritage Foundation Senior Researcher Harvey Feldman, however, said it is not surprising that Beijing submitted objections to the United States [about the visit], and added that the U.S. Department of State considers Lee a private individual, and thereby there is no reason to restrict his U.S. journeys, including a visit to Washington D.C. .

". [T]he United States knows well that there have been severe political confrontations in Taiwan, and there is a sharp distinction between the Pan-Blue and the Pan-Green alliances; it is thereby difficult for the U.S. arms procurement bill to get reviewed [in the Legislative Yuan]. The U.S. side has not blamed the Pan-Green alliance or given it complete responsibility for [the delayed passage of the bill]. [Former President] Lee Teng-hui's U.S. visit and President Chen Shui-bian's Miami transit are proof of improved Taiwan-U.S. relations.

"As a matter of fact, whether Taiwan and China could get along with each other peacefully depends on not only the balance between two sides of the Strait in terms of military and economics, but the balance of the United State and Japan in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States has been busy reconstructing Iraq, and it does not want for the peace in the Asia-Pacific to be threatened. The United States is so worried about China's military emergence, and U.S. high-ranking officials have called upon both sides of the Taiwan Strait to exercise constraint, and to replace confrontations with dialogues.

". [As far as] Taiwan's situation is concerned, if [Taiwan] could collaborate with international friendly powers,

including the United States, Japan, or Asian countries like Vietnam, it would help Taiwan to better confront the brutal Chinese regime. [That's' why] Lee Teng-hui has particularly scheduled trips to New York and Washington D.C. in his U.S. visit.

".[A]s to the speech to be delivered at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., it will help to change the misunderstandings of the U.S. press toward Taiwan's political situation since 2004. It will also promote the sympathy of Americans toward Taiwan's situation [in the world], and it will enable the friendly factions in the U.S. Congress to link with Taiwan again and expand their influence. It will also urge the U.S. authorities to regard [Taiwan] highly, and to reexamine how the national strengths of countries in the Asia-Pacific region ebb and flow. ."

12. "Beware of Poisoned Offerings"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (09/01):

"Beijing has stepped up its `united front' against Taiwan by widening the scope of its offensive to include not only China-based Taiwanese businesspeople and senior politicians but farmers, students and low-level party members as well. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government, sadly, appears to be at its wits' end about how to cope with the problem. In its efforts to avoid whipping up the recent wave of `China fever,' it has done little more than chant slogans and talk about `staying cool.' .

".The scholarships won't cost the Chinese leadership very much, and they offer a huge return on the investment -- the chance to brainwash young Taiwanese to become a `pure Chinese' and plant a new generation of pro-China seedlings who can continue to be cultivated after they return home. China doesn't much care if its motives are obvious. It has even said that `its recruitment of Taiwanese students to study in China is a part of the mother country's unification agenda.' .

"Beijing, of course, has taken advantage of the DPP's wishy-washiness to escalate its offensive. Its tactics are cleverly calculated and substantial. Taipei, bogged down by inertia, seems barely able to raise its head and then only to mutter a few more slogans or engage in a half-hearted war of words with the pan-blue opposition.

"As the saying goes, "to be too lenient is to breed evil." The government's ineptitude simply encourages China to even bolder measures, aided and abetted by the opposition politicians here. Even if the government is incapable of exerting itself, however, the people of Taiwan should take it upon themselves to be on guard against Beijing's poisoned apples. Their future depends on it."

KEEGAN